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R 250655Z JAN 08
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7751
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4667
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1920
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1541
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3635
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2268
RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH 0536
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [SOCI](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: PROMOTING TOLERANCE AMONG INDONESIAN YOUTH

¶11. (U) SUMMARY: A USG-funded Democracy Small Grant project was launched January 24 near Jakarta. The aim of the project--which provides training to Muslim and Christian students--is to promote tolerance and ethical standards in journalistic writing. One of Indonesia's most respected senior journalists and DepPol/C addressed the mix of budding journalists on the importance of effective, responsible journalism. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (U) AN IMPORTANT GRANT: Mission continues its efforts to promote positive interfaith relations in Indonesia. Noted senior journalist Aristedes Katoppo and DepPol/C spoke at the January 24 opening class of a Democracy Small Grant project funded by EAP/PD focused on training high school students on how to report the news in a way that promotes tolerance and understanding in society. The project was designed by the Institute for the Free Flow of Information (ISAI), an Indonesian non-governmental organization which had played a crucial role in the democracy movement of the late 1990's and which continues to play an important role in promoting tolerance today.

¶13. (U) FOCUS IS TOLERANCE, ETHICS: The course is carefully constructed. Designed to train bright young students in sound journalistic ethics while teaching them about tolerance, the course was conceived in light of past sectarian conflicts in Poso, Ambon and other places in Indonesia which were fueled, in part, by hate-mongering or poorly sourced media reporting. Training for the roughly 20 students will be held over the next few months at a mountain resort training center near Jakarta. Courses will be taught by highly respected Indonesian journalists.

¶14. (U) THEY'RE ENTHUSED: The students are excited about the course. During the January 24 ceremony, Katoppo and the DepPol/C held a long discussion with them about the important role they can play as journalists in reporting with sensitivity on ethnic and religious groups, and communal relations in general. They underscored how good journalism can contribute to social cohesion through responsible and thoughtful reporting, and how inaccurate reporting fueled by rumors, etc., can lead to serious communal conflict. The students expressed strong, enthusiastic support for the objectives of the course.

¶15. (U) A REAL MIX: Indonesia is a diverse country and the

student mix reflected that. They were chosen for their merit among eight Muslim boarding schools and Christian high schools, and included persons from a wide range of ethnic and economic backgrounds as well. Their questions on how to report the news in an ethical way demonstrated that they fully appreciated the purpose of the course. One young man attending a south Jakarta Muslim boarding school told us that he has already made one student film on the everyday struggles of young persons and hoped one day to become an actor, screenwriter and filmmaker. He added that the course was important to him in preparing him for these aspirations.

¶6. (U) GOOD FOR MEDIA, SOCIETY: The course is demanding. Students will be expected to produce articles for publication in their school newspapers based on what they learned in the class and the best writers will be given awards at the end of the project. Leveraging other education-related projects that Mission is engaged in, the course can serve as a good role model for teaching students across Indonesia on models of positive citizenship. The course hopefully will produce journalists who in the future--to the great benefit of Indonesian media and society--will become responsible, talented professionals.

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